

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PROGNOSTICS.

Mr. Editor—Inquiring into futurity unquestionably took its rise from a general custom of the oracular priests of delivering their answers. It subsisted a long time among the Greeks and Romans; and being from them adopted by the Christians, it was not till after a succession of ages that it became exploded among the Romans: it consisted in casually opening some celebrated poet, and among the Christians, the scriptures; and drawing from the first passage which presented itself to the eye a prognostic of what would befall the person who thus made the experiment, or as a guidance under some particular exigency.

The practice, about the third century, crept in among the Christians, of casually opening their sacred books for directions in important circumstances; to know the consequence of events, and what they had to fear from their rulers. This consultation of the divine will from the scriptures was of two kinds: the first consisted, as before said, in casually opening those writings; but not before the guidance of heaven had been implored, with prayer, fasting, and other acts of religion. The second was much more simple: the first words of the scriptures, which were singing, or reading, at the very instant when the person, who came to know the disposition of heaven, entered the church, being considered as a prognostic. St. Austin, in his epistle to Janarius, condemns the practice; but St. Gregory of Tours, by the following instance, which he relates as having happened to himself, shows that he entertained a better opinion of it: "Leudastus, earl of Tours," says he, "who was for ruining me with queen Fregonde, coming to Tours, big with evil designs against me, I withdrew to my oratory under a deep concern, where I took the Psalms to try if, at opening them, I should light upon some consoling verse. My heart revived within me when I cast my eyes on this of the 77th psalm: 'He caused them to go with confidence, while the sea swallowed up their enemies.' Accordingly, the count spake not a word to my prejudice; and, leaving Tours that very day, the boat in which he was sunk in a storm, but his skill in swimming saved him."

The following is also from the same author: "Chranmes having revolted against Clotaire, his brother, and being at Dijon, the ecclesiastics of the place, in order to foreknow the success of the procedure, consulted the sacred books; but instead of the Psalms, they made use of St. Paul's Epistle, and the prophet Isaiah. Opening the latter, they read these words: 'I will pluck up the fence of my vineyard, and it shall be destroyed; because, instead of good it has brought forth bad grapes.'

The Epistles agreeing with the prophecy, it was concluded to be a sure presage of the tragical end of Chranmes."

St. Consortia, in her youth, was passionately courted by a young man of a very powerful family, though she had formed a design of taking the veil. Knowing that a refusal would expose her parents to many inconveniences, and perhaps to danger, she desired a week's time to determine her choice. At the expiration of this time, which she had employed in devout exercises, her lover, accompanied by the most distinguished matrons of the city, came to know her answer: "I can neither accept of you nor refuse you," said she, "every thing is in the hand of God; but if you will agree to it, let us go to church and have a mass said; afterward let us lay the holy gospel on the altar, and say a joint prayer: then we will open the book, to be certainly informed of the divine will in this affair." This proposal could not certainly be refused; and the first verse which met the eye of both was the following: "Whosoever loveth father or mother better than me is not worthy of me." Upon this, Consortia said, "You see, God claims me as his own," and the lover acquiesced.

About the eighth century this practice began to lose ground. It was proscribed by several popes and councils, and in terms which rank it among pagan superstitions. However, some traces of this custom are found for several ages after both in the Greek and the Latin church. On the consecration of a bishop, after laying the Bible upon his head, a ceremony still subsisted that the first verse which offered itself was accounted an omen of his future behavior, and of the good and evil which was reserved for him in the course of his episcopacy. Thus a bishop of Rochester, at his consecration by Lafranc, archbishop of Canterbury, had a very happy presage in these words: "Bring hither the best robe, and put it on him." But the answer of the scripture, at the consecration of St. Leitbert, bishop of Cambray, was still more grateful: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." The death of Albert, bishop of Liege, is said to have been intimated to him by these words, which the archbishop who consecrated him found at the opening of the New Testament: "And the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought, and he went and beheaded him in the prison." On this, the primate, tenderly embracing the new bishop, said to him with tears, "My son, having given yourself up to the service of God, carry yourself righteously and devoutly, and prepare yourself for the trial of martyrdom." The bishop was afterwards murdered by the treacherous connivance of the emperor, Henry VI.

These prognostics were alleged on the most important occasions. De Garlande, bishop of Orleans, became so odious to the clergy, that they sent a complaint against him to pope Alexander III., concluding in this manner—"Let your apostolical hands put on strength to *strip naked* the iniquity of this man; that the curse prognosticated on the day of his consecration may overtake him: for the gospels being opened, according to custom, the first words were, 'and the young man, leaving his linen cloth, fled from them naked.'"

However ridiculous these accounts may appear, they are not more so than many other superstitions, such as fortune telling, the interpretation of dreams, &c., which obtain at the present day; but which, thanks to phi-

losophy, are doomed to give way to rational principles. Religion has hitherto formed a horrid and vicious state of society; but the folly is gradually wearing off, and it behoves every one to help in its extinction.

ZENO.

IMPORTANT EXAMINATION. BY LORD BOLINGBROKE.

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Establishment of Christianity.—When the first Galileans spread themselves among the populace of the Greeks and Romans, they found this populace infected with all the absurd traditions that can take possession of ignorant minds enamored with fables. They had gods disguised in the shape of bulls, horses, swans, and serpents to seduce women and girls. Magistrates and respectable citizens did not admit of these extravagancies; but the populace fed on them, and these constituted the pagan mob. I fancy I see the followers of Fox dispute with those of Brown. It was not difficult for Jews, possessed with devils, to make their reveries believed by the ignorant, who believed other reveries equally impertinent. Novelty attracted weak minds, who grew tired of their old follies, and ran to hear new tales, just like the mob at Bartholomew fair, demanding a new farce, and becoming disgusted with the old one, which they have so often seen repeated.

If we believe the books of the Christians, we are told that Peter, son of Jonas, (Acts ix. 39,) dwelt with Simon the tanner, in a garret at Joppa, where he brought to life again the mantua maker, Dorcas. In the Chapter of Lucian, entitled *Philopatris*, he speaks of a Galilean, “with a bald forehead, and large nose, who was carried to the third heaven.” See how he speaks of an assembly of Christians, whom he fell in with: “Tatterdemalions almost naked, with fierce looks and the walk of madmen, who moan and make contortions; swearing by the Son who was begotten by the Father; predicting a thousand misfortunes to the empire; and cursing the emperor.” Such were the first Christians.

He who had given the greatest notoriety to this sect was this Paul with the large nose and bald forehead whom Lucian ridicules. The writings of Paul are sufficient to show how far Lucian was right. What nonsense he writes to the society of Christians forming at Rome among the Jewish rabble. “Circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. (Rom. ii. 25.) Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law. (Rom. iii. 31.) If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.” (Rom. iv. 2.) In thus expressing himself, Paul spoke evidently as a Jew, and not as a Christian. What a discourse to the Corinthians, “Our fathers were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. x. 1, 2.) Was not cardinal Bembo right in calling these epistles *Epistolacæ* [Mean or worthless writings. Ed.] and advising people not to read them? What shall we think of a man who says to the Thessalonians, “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak,” (1 Cor. xiv. 34,) and who in the same epistle announces that they ought to pray and prophesy with their heads covered? (1 Cor. xi. 5.)

Is his quarrel with the other apostles that of a wise and moderate man? Does not every thing show him to be a party man? He is a Christian : he teaches Christianity, and goes seven days successively to sacrifice in the temple of Jerusalem, by the advice of James. He writes to the Galatians, " Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (Gal. v. 2.) And he afterwards circumcises his disciple Timothy, who, as the Jews pretend, was the son of a Greek and a prostitute. He obtrudes himself among the apostles, and boasts of being as much an apostle as the rest of them : " Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. Have we not a power to eat and to drink? have we not a power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord? Who goeth to warfare any time at his own charges?" What frightful things in this passage! The right of living at the expense of those he has subjugated; the right of making them pay the expenses of his wife or his sister: and, at last, the proof that Jesus had brothers, and the presumption that Mary, or Mirja, was brought to bed more than once.

I should be glad to know of whom he is speaking again in his 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xi. " For such are false apostles. Howbeit, wherein soever any is bold, I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they the ministers of Christ? I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in deaths oft. Five times received I forty stripes, save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; a night and a day I have been in the deep." Behold this Paul, who was twenty-four hours in the deep without being drowned! It is a third of the adventure of Jonah. But does he not here clearly manifest his base jealousy of Peter and the other apostles, by thinking to carry the palm from them, because he has received more stripes and floggings than they have done?

Does not his fury for domineering appear in all its insolence, when he says to the same Corinthians, " This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Being now absent, I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not spare." (2 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.) To what simple fools, to what kind of besotted creatures, did he thus address himself like a tyrannical master? Those to whom he had the hardihood to assert that he was carried to the third heaven. Impudent and dastardly impostor! Where is this third heaven in which thou hast travelled? Is it in Venus or in Mars? We laugh at Mahomet, when his commentators pretend that he visited seven heavens in succession, in a single night; but Mahomet, in the Alcoran at least, does not speak of such an extravagance as that which is imputed to him; yet Paul dares to assert that he has performed half of this journey.

Who was this Paul, then, who still makes so much noise, and who is every day quoted at random? He says he was a Roman citizen; which I dare affirm to be an impudent falsehood. No Jew was a Roman citizen, except under the Decii and Philips. If he were of Tarsus, it was neither a Roman city nor a Roman colony for more than a hundred

years after Paul. If he were a native of Giscalus, as St. Jerome states, this village was in Galilee, and, assuredly, the Galileans had never the honor of being Roman citizens. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; that is, he was one of Gamaliel's domestics. Indeed, it is remarked, that he took care of the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, which is the employ of a valet. The Jews pretend that he wished to marry Gamaliel's daughter. We see some traces of this adventure in the ancient book which contains the history of Thecla.

It is not astonishing that the daughter of Gamaliel should reject a little bald headed valet, whose eyebrows hung over a deformed nose, and who was bandylegged. It is thus that the "Acts of Thecla" describe him. Disdained, as he deserved to be, by Gamaliel and his daughter, he joined himself with the infant sect of Cephas, James, Matthew, and Barnabas, in order to annoy the Jews. Any one, who has the least spark of reason, would judge that this cause, which has been assigned for the apostacy of this miserable Jew, is more natural than that attributed to him. How can we persuade ourselves that a celestial light knocked him off horseback at noonday; that a heavenly voice addressed him; that God said to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Ought we not to blush at such stupidity? If God had wished to prevent the disciples of Jesus from being persecuted, would he not have addressed himself to the princes of the nation rather than to Gamaliel's valet? Have they met with less chastisement since Saul fell from his horse? Was not Saul, Paul himself, chastised? What was the utility of this ridiculous miracle? I call heaven and earth to witness, (if I may be permitted to make use of these improper words, heaven and earth,) that there never was a legend more stupid, more fanatical, more disgusting, nor more deserving of our horror and contempt.

Of the Gospels.—As soon as the societies of half Jews, half Christians, had by degrees established themselves among the ignorant people at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Alexandria, some time after Vespasian, each of these little societies wished to make its own gospel. Fifty of them have been reckoned, and there were many more. It is known that they all contradict one another. This could not be otherwise, since they were all composed in different places. All of them agree that their Jesus was the son of Mary, or Mirja, and that he was put to death. All of them ascribe to him as many prodigies as are to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Luke dresses up a genealogy for him quite different to that planned by Matthew; and neither of them dream of giving us the genealogy of Mary, who was his only parent. The enthusiast Pascal cries out, "This is not acting in concert." Undoubtedly not. Each has written extravagancies for his little society, according to his own fancy. This accounts for one evangelist pretending that the little Jesus was brought up in Egypt, and another saying that he was brought up at Bethlehem. One of them makes him go only *once* to Jerusalem, while the others say he went *three* times. One of them causes three wise men, whom they call three kings, to be conducted by a new star, and causes all the little children of the country to be put to death by the first Herod, who was then

near the end of his days. The others are silent about the star, and the wise men, and the massacre. (The massacre of the innocents is certainly the height of folly, as well as the tale of the three wise men conducted by a star. How could Herod, who was then almost on his death bed, fear being dethroned by the son of a village carpenter, who was just born. Herod died only two or three years after, at the age of seventy. It would have been necessary for this child to make war against the empire. Could such a fear take possession of any man, who was not an absolute fool? Is it possible that they have proposed to human credulity such stupid fooleries, which outdo Robert the Devil, and John of Paris? Man is a very contemptible being when he suffers himself to be governed in such a way!) At length, to explain these contradictions, we have been compelled to make a concordance, and this concordance is less concordant than the matters they wished to reconcile.

Almost all the gospels, which the Christians never made known but to their own little flocks, were visibly forged after the taking of Jerusalem. We have a very evident proof of it in that attributed to Matthew. This book puts into the mouth of Jesus these words to the Jews: "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." A forger is always discovered in some part of his work. During the siege of Jerusalem, there was a Zacharias, son of Barachias, killed between the temple and the altar, by the faction of the zealots. This enables us easily to detect the imposition; otherwise we might have read over the whole Bible to enable us to do so. The Greeks and Romans read but little, and the gospels were entirely unknown to them. Lies were told with impunity.

An evident proof that the gospel attributed to Matthew, was not written till a long time after him by some miserable half Jew, half Christian Hellenist, is this famous passage: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) There was no church in the time of Jesus and of Matthew. Church is a Greek word. The assembly of the people of Athens styled itself *Ecclesia*. This expression was only adopted by the Christians in process of time, when they had obtained a kind of government. It is clear, then, that an impostor took the name of Matthew and wrote his gospel in very bad Greek. I confess it would be comical enough for Matthew, who had himself been a publican, to compare the heathens with publicans. But whoever might have been the author of this ridiculous comparison, none but a madcap among the most illiterate of the people would have looked upon a Roman knight, who was authorized to receive the imposts established by government, as a man that ought to be despised. The idea alone is destructive of all administration, and not only unworthy of a man whom God had inspired, but unworthy the lackey of an honest citizen.

There are two gospels of the infancy. The first relates, that a young beggar patted the little Jesus, his comrade, behind, and that the little Jesus immediately killed him. *Kai para kremai peson apeidonon*. At another time he made birds of clay, which flew away. His method of learning the alphabet was quite divine. Those tales are not more ridiculous than that of his being carried off by the devil; that of his trans-

figuration on Mount Tabor; that of the water changed into wine; and that of the devil being sent into a herd of swine. Thus this gospel of the infancy was long in veneration.

The second gospel of the infancy is not less curious. Mary, who was conducting her son into Egypt, met with some girls that were deploring the loss of their brother, who had been transformed into a mule. Mary and her little one did not fail to change the mule into its former shape of a man; but we do not know whether the miserable animal was any better for the change. As they proceeded on the road, the wandering family met with two robbers, one named Dumachus, the other Titus. Dumachus was for robbing the Virgin, and doing something still more scandalous; but Titus took Mary's part, and gave forty drachms to persuade him to let the family go, without doing them any injury. Jesus declared to the Holy Virgin, that Dumachus should be the wicked thief, and Titus the good thief; that they would one day be executed with him; that Titus should go into paradise, and Dumachus to the devil.

The gospel according to St. James, the elder brother of Jesus, or that of Peter Barjonas, a gospel known and boasted of by Tertullian and by Origen, was in still greater repute. It was called *Proto-Evangelion*, or First Gospel. It was perhaps the first which spoke of the new star, of the arrival of the wise men, and of the little children whom the first Herod ordered to be massacred. There is still a kind of gospel or acts of John, in which Jesus is said to have danced with his apostles the evening before he died; and the circumstance is rendered probable, as the *Therapeutæ* were really accustomed to dance in a ring; a ceremony that must be very pleasing to our heavenly Father.

Why does the most scrupulous Christian now laugh without remorse at all the gospels and acts which are no longer in the canon; and why does he not dare to laugh at those adopted by the church? They are nearly the same tales; but fanaticism adores in one name what appears the height of ridicule in another.

At length, four gospels are chosen; and the great reason for having that number, as stated by St. Irenæus, is, that there are only four cardinal points; that God is seated on cherubims, and that cherubims have four different shapes. St. Jerome, in his preface to Mark's gospel, adds to the four winds and four shaped animals, the four rings of the poles, on which the box called the ark was carried. Theophilus of Antioch proves that as Lazarus was dead only four days, we can consequently admit only four gospels; St. Cyprian proves the same thing by the four rivers that watered paradise. We must be very impious not to yield to such reasons as these.

However, previous to any preference being given to these four gospels, the fathers of the two first centuries scarcely ever quoted any except the gospels which are now styled apocryphal. This is an incontestible proof that our four gospels were not written by those to whom they are attributed. I wish they were so. I wish, for example, Luke had written that which goes under his name. I would say to Luke, "How darcest thou maintain that Jesus was born under the governorship of Cyreneus, or Quirinus, when it is attested that Quirinus was not governor of Syria till more than ten years afterwards? How hast thou the face to say, that

Augustus ordered all the world to be taxed, and that Mary went to Bethlehem for that purpose? A tax on all the world! What an expression! Thou hast heard that Augustus had a book which contained a detail of the forces of the empire, and its finances; but a tax on all the subjects of the empire is what he never could have thought of. Still less could he think of a tax on all the world. No writer, either Greek, Roman, or barbarian, has mentioned such an extravagance. Behold thee, then, convicted of a most enormous falsehood, and yet thy book must be respected!"

But who fabricated these four gospels? Is it not probable that they were written by Christian Hellenists, since the Old Testament is scarcely ever quoted, except from the Septant version, which was unknown in Judea? The apostles knew no more about the Greek language than Jesus did. How could they have quoted the Septant? Nothing but the miracle of Pentecost could teach Greek to ignorant Jews.

What a collection of contrarieties and falsehoods remains in these four gospels! Were there only one, it would suffice to show them to be works of ignorance. Did we find only the single tale given by Luke, that Jesus was born under the governorship of Cyreneus, when Augustus ordered all the world to be taxed, would not this falsehood alone cause us to throw away the book with contempt? In the first place, there never was such a taxation, and no author speaks of it. Secondly, Cyreneus was not governor of Syria till ten years after the epocha of the birth of Jesus. In the gospels there are almost as many errors as words, and thus it is they succeed with the people.

To be continued. 114

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LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible. By the Secretary.

LECTURE XIII.

In my last lecture on the inconsistencies, absurdities, and contradictions of the Bible, there was one feature in the story of Abraham, of which the time would not permit a full elucidation; but which, from its importance in the Jewish and Christian systems of theology, ought not to be lost sight of. The point I allude to, is the alleged *covenant* between the Deity and the "Father of the Faithful," and his posterity.

It must appear, at first sight, to every one accustomed to think, as a most extraordinary circumstance, that the Almighty, who is described as *infinite*, should have held *colloquial* intercourse with Abraham, or with any other being belonging to this limited globe of ours. The word *infinity* implies that which *cannot* be circumscribed. Hence, if God be infinite he can *not* be in one particular place at one particular time. Had God actually visited the spot where Abraham resided, and there in person entered into a covenant or agreement with him, God could not have been every where—nay, no where else at the same time.

In *person* he must have appeared to Abraham; in *person* he must have conversed with Abraham; in *person* he must have communicated the con-

ditions of the covenant to Abraham. Consequently God was there *personally*, and therefore, he was *nowhere else personally*. Hence God is a *finite* being. Now, all Christians maintain that God is *infinite*. Since, then, it is clear—first, that an infinite being cannot be circumscribed; secondly, that a being who appears personally to any one is a circumscribed being; and, thirdly, that God, if an infinite being, cannot appear personally to *any one*, in *any place*, at *any time*, it must follow that he never held colloquial intercourse with Abraham; and, consequently, that all that is said in the book of Genesis about his covenanting with God is a palpable fabrication.

But supposing this difficulty to be got over. Admitting, for the sake of illustration, that an infinite, almighty being, could so far divest himself of his perfections, as to condescend to enter into a bargain with the creatures he had made, it follows that the covenant which he and Abraham entered into only related to the decision of a question of human policy—namely, whether Abraham's descendants, by right of primogeniture, or immediate descent, should or should not invade and possess a country, which was held by a different people by right of prescription?

To adjust or settle this question, Moses, after his return from exile, proclaimed a decree, which he did not hesitate to issue in the name of "the Lord." This decree commanded the Israelites to pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan, and there destroy all the inhabitants. Always ambitious to inherit this land of plenty, and being an itinerant, unprincipled set, the Israelites readily obeyed their chieftain. It is not, however, said that a regular siege or pitched battle ensued, but only that the Israelites took possession of all the lands and houses occupied by the Canaanites, in virtue of the pretended covenant with God and Abraham. What murders, adulteries, rapes, thefts, and blasphemies followed this victory, we are not told. But that these, always concomitant tokens of "divine authority," signalized the event, we must of necessity admit.

According to Christian commentators, who echo the Old Testament legends and fables, "the supreme being selected one family from an idolatrous world; nursed it up by various acts of his providence into a great nation—communicated to that nation a knowledge of his holiness, justice, mercy, power, and wisdom—disseminated them at various times through every part of the earth, that they might be a '*leaven to leaven the whole lump*,' that they might assure all other nations of the existence of one supreme God, the creator and preserver of the world, the only proper object of adoration."

Strange things and doings these! What! the Deity select a family of idolaters from an idolatrous world—select an idolent faction—a blasphemous herd from an "idolatrous world"—nurse up a daring race of profligates, prostitutes, liars, swearers, and house breakers "by various acts of his providence," into a great nation—"communicated to that nation a knowledge of his holiness, justice, mercy, power, and wisdom;"—yet a nation always the most unholy, the most unjust, and the most unmerciful that ever appeared on the earth—a nation and a people, who, in their days of power, were powerful only to do evil, being neither attached to wisdom nor mindful of her precepts. However, we are assured they were disseminated, at various times, throughout every part of the earth,

that they might be a "leaven to leaven the whole lump"—that they might certify to all other nations the existence of one god; and certainly they have made *their god* manifest in all the countries they have visited. They have, by their base and perfidious dereliction from virtue, like other nations, denied the justice, the wisdom, and the goodness of the *true God*. They have leavened the lump in Europe, in parts of Asia, in America, and throughout portions of the African domains—a leaven which has proved sufficiently pungent—a leaven which has crumbled humanity into the powder of subtlety, and raised combustious furies from the silence of error—a leaven which has made usury the standard medium of wealth and of power. Usury! yes, my friends, as much practised, and as much countenanced in this our Christian land as in any of the most arbitrary empires of the globe; countenanced by your legislatures, on the exchange, and at our numerous banks. But the Jews, say our Christian teachers, were appointed to "leaven the whole lump."

Selected to be the oracles of divine truth, and of created excellence, the "chosen people" wandered to and fro; sometimes under the escort of a warlike legion—sometimes accompanied by arks and tables—sometimes inspired by priests and prophets; but all at times, and on all occasions, tumultuous, ungrateful, and wicked. Were these, then, the peculiar favorites of a righteous God? These the generation for whom Deity condescended to covenant with man? These the chosen people of a being whose essence is purity? Forbid it truth—forbid that man—reasonable man, should so far abandon his intellects, as to admit such gross absurdities.

But those interested in maintaining the Christian system, tell us that the destruction of the Canaanites is perfectly reconcilable to God's moral justice. According to the words put into the mouth of Noah, Canaan had offended in the person of Ham; and this offence, which consisted in Ham's informing his brethren that their father was drunk, could only be pardoned or obliterated in the total destruction of that people.

That Deity never gave such a command, may at once be inferred from those principles of natural law, of which he is considered the author. It is impossible that the actions of a set of men not more atrocious than their invaders, should incur the displeasure of a *just God*. Canaan may have been destroyed by natural causes. But these were not sought after by the Bible writers. Moses, if such a person ever existed, and who, perhaps, could not write his own name, has said that the Canaanites were destroyed by the Israelites. This was enough, for both Jews and Christians immediately concluded that God, whom they always exhibit as the prompter to Moses, had so ordered it. But does this leave a doubt about the incoherence of an assertion so totally vague and uncharacteristic—an assertion as unfounded in truth, as it is derogatory of the goodness and the supremacy of the Almighty.

In what is said, in the book of Genesis, about the casting out of Ismael, the son of Hagar, and the prosperity which was promised to Isaac and his descendants, there is a manifest departure from all rules of logic, and from truth. It was in Isaac that the race of the patriarch was blessed. Yet Isaac was father only of an unfortunate and contemptible nation, who for a long period were slaves, and have for a longer been dis-

persed over the earth. Ismael, on the contrary, was the father of the Arabs, who, in course of time, established the empire of the caliphs, one of the most powerful and extensive in the world.

In this, remarks Voltaire, "the posterity of Hagar's son Ismael, took ample revenge on the posterity of Sarah's son Isaac, in favor of whom he had been cast out. The Saracens, descending in a right line from Ismael, made themselves masters of Jerusalem, which belonged, by right of conquest, to the posterity of Isaac."

The same writer justly observes, as to the ungallant treatment of Hagar by Abraham, that he who is said to have been in possession of so many shepherds that with their assistance alone he defeated the armies of four great kings, should, at least, have given a small flock to Hagar when he sent her away in the desert. This same Voltaire, on whom the priesthood have heaped the vilest calumnies—whose memory has been, and still is, defamed by fanaticism—this friend of man, of whose character the most atrocious libels have been uttered, and of whose philanthropy the most daring falsehoods have been asserted by the abettors of an abominable superstition—when contemplating the treatment which the unfortunate Hagar received from the hard hearted individual, whom she had cherished in her bosom, and to whom she had borne a son, instead of using terms of reproach for an act which might have justified the severest censure, expresses himself in a language truly indicative of the goodness and fullness of his heart. "I would," says this great man, "have given my old companion Hagar a few sheep, a few goats, a few suits of clothes for herself and our son Ismael—a good she ass for the mother, and a pretty foal for the child—a camel to carry their baggage—and, at least, two servants to attend them, and prevent them from being devoured by wolves." Disinterestedness, like this, has no part in either the Jewish or Christian codes; the tendency of which is to obliterate all the natural feelings, and to render mankind selfish and cruel.

To be continued.

NASHOBA.

Explanatory Notes, respecting the Nature and Objects of the Institution of Nashoba, and of the Principles upon which it is founded. Addressed to the Friends of Human Improvement, in all Countries and of all Nations. By Frances Wright.

Continued from page 95.

The limits of the present address will not admit of a detailed defence of the principles, and explanation of the practice of cooperative labor. And, however great their advantages, the founder of Nashoba views them as entirely subordinate to the one great principle of human liberty which she believes them calculated to further and secure.

She sees in the cooperative system, as it has been termed, *the means, not the end*; but, after mature consideration of its theory, and some observation of its practice, believing it the best means yet discovered for securing the one great end—that of human liberty and equality; she has for that reason, and that reason, only, made it the base of the experiment at Nashoba.

The institution of Nashoba being thus founded on the broad basis of human liberty and equality, every provision made by the legal act of the founder, as well as the subsequent regulations of the trustees, are shaped in accordance with it. It will be seen by a reference to that public record, of which it is recommended to attach a copy to this address, that the personal independence of each individual member of the society is effectually secured, and that, without disputing the established laws of the country, the Institution recognizes only within its bosom the force of its own principles.

It is declared, in the deed of the founder, that no individual can be received as member, but after a noviciate of six months, and then only by a *unanimous* vote of the resident proprietors. It is also provided, that the admission of a husband shall not involve that of a wife, nor the admission of a wife that of a husband, nor the admission of either or both of the parents that of children *above the age of fourteen*. Each individual must pass through a separate trial, and be received or rejected on the strength of his or her merits or demerits. And, as in the reception of members the individual character is the only one recognized, so by the principle of the society that character can never be forfeited. The marriage law existing without the pale of the institution, is of no force within that pale. No woman can forfeit her individual rights or independent existence, and no man assert over her any rights or power whatsoever beyond what he may exercise over her free and voluntary affections. Nor, on the other hand, may any woman assert claims to the society or peculiar protection of any individual of the other sex, beyond what mutual inclination dictates and sanctions; while, to every individual member of either sex, is secured the protection and friendly aid of all.

The tyranny usurped by the matrimonial law, over the most sacred of the human affections, can perhaps only be equalled by that of the unjust public opinion, which so frequently stamps with infamy, or condemns to martyrdom, the best grounded and most generous attachments which ever did honor to the human heart, simply because unlegalized by human ceremonies equally idle and offensive in the form and mischievous in their tendency.

This tyranny, as now exercised over the strongest and at the same time, if refined by mental cultivation, the noblest of the human passions, had probably its source in religious prejudice or priestly rapacity; while it has found its plausible and more philosophical apology in the apparent dependance of children on the union of the parents. To this plea it might perhaps be replied, that the end, how important soever, is not secured by the means: that the forcible union of unsuitable and unsuited parents can little promote the happiness of the offspring; and that, supposing the protection of children to be the real source and object of our code of morals and of our matrimonial laws, what shall we say of the effects of these humane provisions on the fate and fortunes of one large family of helpless innocents, born into the world in spite of all prohibitions and persecutions, and whom a cruel law and yet more cruel opinion disown and stigmatize. But how wide a field does this topic embrace! how much cruelty; how much oppression of the weak and helpless does it not involve!

The children denominated illegitimate, or *natural*, (as if in contradistinction of others who should be out of Nature because under law,) may be multiplied to any number by an unprincipled father, easily exonerated by law and custom from the duties of paternity, while these duties and their accompanying shame are left to a mother but too often rendered desperate by misfortune! And should we follow out our review of the law of civilized countries, we shall find the offspring termed legitimate, with whom honor and power and possession are associated, adjudged, in case of matrimonial dissensions, to the father, who, by means of this legal claim, has not unfrequently bowed to servitude the spirit of a fond mother, and held her as a galley slave to the oar.

But it is not here that this subject can be discussed in all its bearings. The writer of this article will however challenge all the advocates of existing institutions, and existing opinions, to test them by the secret feelings of their own bosom, and then to pronounce on their justice. She will challenge them to consider the wide field of human society as now existing, to examine its practice and to weigh its theory, and to pronounce on the consistency of the one and the virtue of the other. She will challenge them to determine how many of the moral evils, and numerous family of physical diseases, which now torture the human species, have their source in the false opinions and vicious institutions, which have perverted the best source of human happiness—the intercourse of the sexes, into the deepest source of human misery. Let us look into our streets, our hospitals, our asylums; let us look into the secret thought of the anxious parent, trembling for the minds and bodies of sons starting into life, or mourning over the dying health of daughters condemned to the unnatural repression of feelings and desires inherent to their very organization, and necessary alike to their moral and physical well being.

Or let us look to the victims—not of pleasure—not of love—nor yet of their own depravity, but of those ignorant laws, ignorant prejudices, and of that ignorant code of morals, which condemn one portion of the female sex to vicious excess, another to as vicious restraint, and all to defenceless helplessness, and slavery; and generally the whole of the male sex to debasing licentiousness, if not to loathsome brutality.

And must we be told that “private vices are public benefits,” that the units of individual misery make the sum of the general good? or that the immolation of some and suffering of all are requisite to secure public order, and to moderate human population to the supplies yielded for its support. As if living creatures could ever for any space of time positively exceed the means of subsistence; or as if their tendency to increase beyond a healthy sufficiency of these means, could ever be repressed save by the increase and spread of real knowledge, which should teach human beings to consider the creation of other human beings as the most important of all actions; and the securing to the beings of their creation a sound and healthy organization and equally a sound and healthy education with all the means of a happy existence, as the most important of all duties. In the moral, intellectual, and physical cultivation of both sexes, should we seek, as we can only find, the source and security of human happiness and human virtue. Prejudice and fear are weak barriers against passions which, inherent in our nature and demanding only ju-

dicious training to form the ornament and supply the best joys of our existence, are maddened into violence by pernicious example and pernicious restraint, varied with as pernicious indulgence. Let us correct our views of right and wrong, correct our moral lessons, and so correct the practice of rising generations! Let us not teach, that virtue consists in the crucifying the affections and appetites, but in their judicious government! Let us not attach ideas of purity to monastic chastity, impossible to man or woman without consequences fraught with evil, nor ideas of vice to connections formed under the auspices of kind feeling! Let us inquire, not if a mother be a wife, or a father a husband, but if parents can supply, to the creatures they have brought into being, all things requisite to make existence a blessing. Let the force of public opinion be brought against the thoughtless ignorance or cruel selfishness which, either with or without the sanction of a legal or religious permit, so frequently multiplies offspring beyond the resources of the parents. Let us check the force of passions, as well as their precocity, not by the idle terror of imaginary crime in the desire itself, but by the just and benevolent apprehension of bringing into existence unhappy or imperfect beings! Let us teach the young mind to reason, and the young heart to feel; and, instead of shrouding our own bodies, wants, desires, senses, affections, and faculties in mystery, let us court inquiry, and show, that acquaintance with our own nature can alone guide us to judicious practice, *and that in the consequence of human actions exists the only true test of their virtue or their vice.*

We need only to observe the effects of the present system to be convinced of its error. When is the repressive force of public opinion perceived? Whom does it affright? The poor, the ignorant, the unhappy pauper, the diseased profligate, the licentious hypocrite? Is it they who feel the force either of just or unjust censure; or who hesitate to call into existence sentient beings, born to ignorance, want, or disease? No! is it not rather upon that class whose feelings and intellects have been most cultivated, and who consequently are best fitted to give life to a healthy and intellectual race, upon whom the weight of coercive prejudice falls?

Let us advert to the far more important half of the human species (whether we consider their share in the first formation and rearing the infant, or their moral influence on society.) Let us consider the effects of existing institutions and opinions as exemplified among women. In what class do we find the largest number of childless females and devoted victims to unnatural restraints? Certainly among the cultivated, talented, and independent women who (in England more especially) shrink equally from the servitude of matrimony, and from the opprobrium stamped on unlegalized connexions.

But again, the writer of this address must observe, that she can here only touch upon subjects, which she feels herself prepared to examine in detail; but which she must defer until a suitable medium be supplied in the periodical publication, which it will be the object of the society to issue, as soon as it can be done consistently with its interests.

It is considered that the peculiar object of the founder, "The benefit of the negro race," may best be consulted by the admission and incorporation of suitable individuals of that, and the mixed race, on the same

principles of equality which guide the admission of all members; and farther, that such individuals may best be found among the *free citizens of color*, who form no inconsiderable and frequently a very respectable body in the American population, more especially in that of the southern cities.

As it was the object of the founder to attempt the peaceful influence of example, and silently to correct the practice and reach the laws through the feelings and the reason of the American people, she carefully forebore outraging any of the legal provisions in the slave state in which she ventured to attempt her experiment, or those of any of the slave states with which she is acquainted, and trusted confidently to the national good sense, and to the liberality fostered by the national institutions, for the safety of any experiment however exposed to the national prejudices, which should be undertaken in a spirit of kindness to all men, and conducted within the limits of private, or, as in the present case, of *associate* property.

It is not supposed that (with some rare exceptions) human beings raised under the benumbing influence of brutal slavery can be elevated to the level of a society based upon the principles of moral liberty and voluntary cooperation. The experiment, therefore, as respects *slave* population, it is intended to limit, at Nashoba, to the first purchase of the founder, excepting in cases where planters, becoming members, may wish to place their negroes under the protection of the institution. And looking to effect the more especial object of the institution through the present free race of color, and more especially by the education of colored children, the founder judged that she should best conciliate the laws of the southern states, and the popular feelings of the whole Union, as well as the interests of the emancipated negro, by providing for the colonization of all the slaves emancipated by the society, in a free country, without the limits of the United States. Personal observation had taught her the danger of launching a freed slave into the midst of an inimical population. And if unfit, as he must of necessity be, for incorporation into the society as a free proprietor, it appeared consistent with justice and humanity to enjoin his being sent to a country of safety for his color, when ejected from the protection of the institution.

While occupied, as they fondly hope, in paving the way for the moral regeneration of American citizens of color, the trustees of Nashoba believe that *slavery* may safely be left to work its own ruin. The falling price of cotton must soon reduce to zero the profits of the upland planter, and fortunately the growth of sugar is restricted by climate to a small portion of the American slave territory. But when the bankrupt fortunes of the southern planters shall have put an end to the *internal slave trade* of the United States, and Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky, the *Guinea* of the states farther south, shall have lost their last staple *commodity of profit*, the principles avowed in this paper may attract the national attention, and the olive of peace and brotherhood be embraced by the white man and the black; and their children, approached in feeling and education, gradually blend into one their blood and their hue.

The writer of this address is fully aware that the topic most offensive to the American public is that now under consideration. But so, to that

public is it more peculiarly addressed ; not, it will be believed, with *a view to offend*, but with the single view of exposing the principles of Nashoba to the American people, and calling their attention to the cool investigation of a subject unhappily seldom approached but with the anger of sectional or the pride of national feeling.

The strength of the prejudice of color, as existing in the United States and in the European colonies, can in general be little conceived, and less understood in the old continent; yet, however whimsical it may there appear, is it, in fact, more ridiculous than the European prejudice of birth? The superior excellence which the one supposes in a peculiar descent, or merely in a peculiar name, the other imagines in a peculiar complexion or set of features ; and perhaps it is only by considering man in many countries, and observing all his varying and contradictory prejudices, that we can discover the equal absurdity of all.

Those to whom the American institutions and American character are familiar, and who have considered the question of negro slavery in all its bearings, will probably be disposed to pronounce, with the writer of this address, that the emancipation of the colored population cannot be *progressive through the laws*. It must, and can only be *progressive through the feelings* ; and, through that medium, be finally complete and entire, involving at once political equality and the amalgamation of the races.

To be continued.

Free Press Association.—A *scientific* lecture will be delivered in the Temple of Arts, William street, on Sunday (tomorrow) the 9th March, at 11 o'clock forenoon.

In the afternoon, the *theological* lectures will be continued, at half past 2 o'clock.

Free Enquirers.—A lecture will be delivered in the Military Hall, corner of Sixth avenue and Fourth street, Greenwich, on Sunday (tomorrow) the 9th March, at 3 o'clock P. M.

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